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MAUBERE

Newsletter of the East Timor Ireland Solidarity Campaign

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Ballot under threat

Prospects of a free and fair ballot on East Timor's future remain uncertain as Indonesian propaganda campaigning, military-backed militia violence and voter intimidation continue to spread throughout the country.

The historic UN-sponsored vote has already been postponed once - put back from August 8th to later in the month - and with the situation worsening each day it may be postponed again or cancelled altogether. That would undoubtedly be viewed as a success by the Indonesian military (ABRI) and it militia, which continue to undermine the consultative process through their reign of terror. But it would also be seen by many East Timorese as preferable to going to the polls under the threat of violence.

Attacks on pro-independence activists and supporters have intensified since ABRI began a more forceful recruitment drive of militiamen earlier this year. East Timorese villagers have been forced at gunpoint to join the death squads, bolstering the hired hands brought in from West Timor and Indonesia. Having been armed and trained by ABRI, the militiamen have been given free reign to terrorise the local population, murdering, raping and looting with impunity.

In one of the worst atrocities, pro-integration paramilitaries attacked the home of a well-known independence activist in Dili, Manuel Carrascalao, killing at least 30 displaced villagers who had taken refuge inside. Women were hacked to death and their children had their skulls crushed by the militiamen as ABRI troops and the local Indonesian police watched, guarding the exits to prevent any escape. It was one of the most blatant examples of official support for the militia, who just hours earlier held a rally outside the residence of East Timor's Indonesian governor Abilio Soares at

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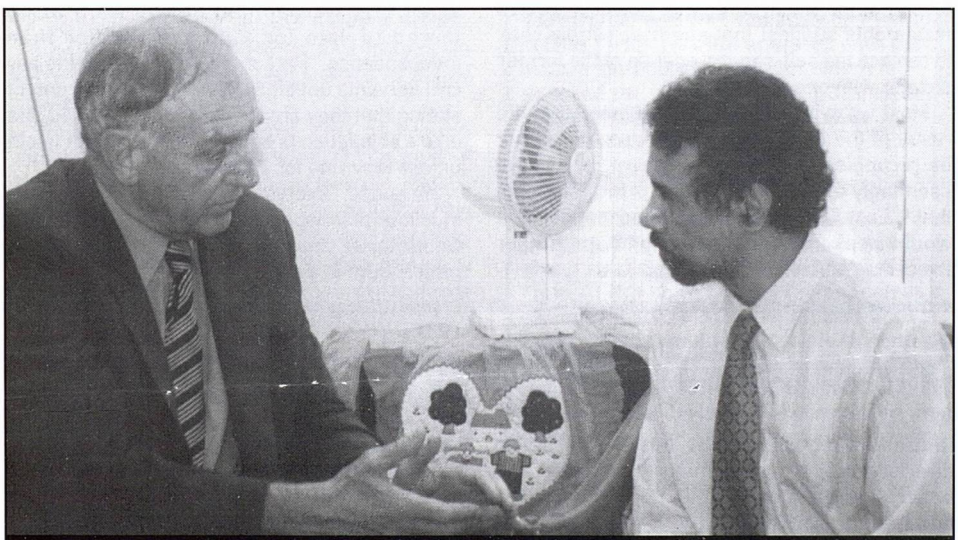
Andrews witnesses militia terror



The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr David Andrews, meeting the East Timorese leader, Xanana Gusmao, who is under house arrest in Jakarta.

On a recent visit to East Timor, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, David Andrews, came face to face with the Indonesian military's campaign of terror.

In Dili, he witnessed a violent rally of pro-integration militia who, with the blessing of government and army officials, engaged in a killing spree targeted at pro-independence activists. At least 30 people were massacred just 500 yards from where the Minister met the Nobel Peace laureate Bishop Carlos Belo, their talks interrupted by a man who declared that his son was being killed at that very moment.

This was after Mr Andrews had met the Indonesian governor in East Timor, Abilio Soares, who showed complete indifference towards the recent rise in State-sponsored violence and utter disdain towards the current peace process.

The trip to Dili on April 17th formed part of a six-day visit to Indonesia and East Timor during which time the Minister held talks with independence leader Xanana Gusmao, the Indonesian President BJ Habibie and the head of the Indonesian armed forces Gen Wiranto. The delegation for the visit, which was extensively covered by The Irish Times,

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EU Timor post for Ireland

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, David Andrews, has been appointed EU special representative for East Timor with particular responsibility for issuing statements on the illegally-occupied former Portuguese colony.

The appointment, made in Brussels in July, was welcomed by a broad range of campaign groups, from the Irish development agency Trocaire to the National Council for Timorese Resistance (CNRT).

Mr Joao Carrascalao, head of the CNRT, said "Mr Andrews has taken a personal interest in East Timor for some time. I met him in Ireland early this year. He subsequently visited Jakarta and East Timor in April, met with President Habibie and Xanana Gusmao, and Timorese leaders in Dili.

"But more importantly, perhaps, he also met ordinary Timorese, innocent people traumatised by the Indonesian militia's slaughter of their loved ones, saw the Indonesian generals reviewing the militia parade which preceded the Dili massacre on Saturday, April 17th, and saw the beginnings of the massacre itself."

Welcoming the appointment, ETISC said it was a vindication of Ireland's strong position on East Timor at international fora as well as an acknowledgment of Mr Andrew's personal concern for the plight of the East Timorese. It is hoped the appointment will lead to a more progressive and unified stance on East Timor from EU member states, many of which still supply arms to the Indonesian military.

Publication sponsored by Trócaire

Andrews witnesses militia terror

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included the Irish Ambassador, Brendan Lyons, his political director, Richard Townsend, and Tom Hyland of ETISC.

Mr Andrews arrived in Dili as the rally of pro-integration militiamen was taking place outside governor Soares' residence. His first appointment was a meeting with the governor who moments earlier had overseen a call to arms from death squad leaders.

The Minister was taken aback by the governor's contempt for democracy. "Don't ask the baby what it wants, feed it," he told Mr Andrews. "Don't ask the people what they want. Do it. Then after some time ask them what they think."

If autonomy was rejected "we would struggle for integration", he said ominously. "That would mean dividing East Timor because if we don't there would be war. If they want all of East Timor, it means war."

Mr Andrews later met Bishop Belo who gave testimony to the rising wave of violence across East Timor. "There is no plan for free elections here," he said. "The paramilitaries are going every place, obliging people to show Indonesian flags. They are provided with weapons. Many people ran away into the jungle. The military did not protect them."

Proof of this terror campaign was not far away. As Bishop Belo spoke, Manuel Carrascalao arrived at his home to say that his son was being killed by pro-Integration militiamen.

"You mean a man is being murdered?" asked Mr Andrews. The bishop replied: "One hour ago he came in and said the militias were attacking his house. What can we do? Their aim is to destroy and kill, and keep us feeling afraid."

On meeting Indonesian president BJ Habibie in Jakarta two days later, Mr Andrews gave a "very frank and unvarnished" account of his experiences in Dili, and a "blunt assessment" of governor Soares, according to a Department of Foreign Affairs spokesman.

Mr Habibie affirmed, in the course of the 45-minute meeting, that the people of East Timor could opt for independence if they rejected Indonesian plans for autonomy. The president said "we can separate in peace".

Mr Andrews also met the East Timorese leader Xanana Gusmao, who continues to be held under house arrest in Jakarta, and the Indonesian armed forces chief, Gen Wiranto, who the Minister urged to take charge of the situation in East Timor to protect the people.

Ballot under threat

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which blood-thirsty calls were made for the murder of all independence activists.

Despite Indonesian collusion with the militia, the United Nations had made ABRI responsible for security in the territory for the referendum. A small, unarmed, international force - numbering only 270, including nine gardai - has been charged with supervising the vote but only in an advisory capacity under ABRI. The limitations of this UN mission have already been exposed with international police and aid workers becoming the target of attacks from paramilitaries, backed by the very same army that is meant to be keeping the peace.

Moreover, the commitment of the UN to honouring a vote in favour of independence, if that is the outcome, has been called into question after the UN's special envoy to East Timor expressed his belief that the territory should have a status similar to that of Hong Kong in China. The Pakistani diplomat, Dr Jamsheed Marker, is deeply distrusted by East Timorese leaders after making numerous statements seemingly aimed at lowering international expectations of independence for East Timor.

The ballot has been further undermined by political changes in Indonesia with the victor of the recent general election, Megawati Sukarnoputri, publicly siding with ABRI against President BJ Habibie's peace plans. A daughter of the former Indonesian ruler Sukarno, Sukarnoputri has yet to verbalise a clear political philosophy other than that she does not belong to the Suharto regime. However, recent statements suggest that she may simply seek to replace the self-serving agenda of the former dictator with one of her own.

Most worryingly, she has suggested that the result of the East Timor referendum would not be recognised by her government. In a move seemingly aimed at appeasing ABRI, she said that if East Timor was granted independence it would weaken Indonesia and perhaps trigger the ceding of Aceh and West Papua.

Meanwhile, the situation on the ground worsens. In July, it was discovered that militias and government authorities were conducting illegal voter registration in attempt to frustrate the consultation process. During the past few weeks, militias and local officials in several districts went from door to door with false registration forms, forcing citizens to sign and explaining to them that they would not have to resister with the United Nations Assistance Mission in East Timor (UNAMET).

The illegal registration is designed to create confusion among the citizens. If they do not register with the UN they will not have the right to participate in the ballot. Church sources said that in some areas East Timorese were forced to hand over the documents needed for official UN registration.

Thousands of villagers have also been forced from their homes by militia and ABRI troops with the aim of ensuring they are unable to vote in the referendum. In the region of Liquica alone, 9,000 refugees have disappeared.

The Nobel peace laureate Bishop Carlos Belo of Dili said that without a UN peacekeeping force in East Timor which would disarm the militia "it is better not to have a referendum". He said "the Indonesians know they will lose the referendum if people are free to vote. This is why they have developed a strategy to make a free vote impossible."

In recent weeks more than 1,000 secret service agents have been sent to East Timor as well as two new infantry companies. "They are infiltrating everywhere. They push the militias, they give the orders and they themselves shoot." He warned that people were being forced to vote for autonomy rather than independence. "Part of the strategy is not to pay civil servants until they have signed a document stating that they are for autonomy. In Alieu, the entire population is being threatened with death unless they vote for autonomy."

He added: "Everyone is afraid. Anyone who is in favour of independence has gone into hiding. Under these circumstances, you cannot have a referendum in peace and freedom."

Social spending diverted to militia

Indonesian government funds are being diverted into paying pro-integration militia and undermining the consultation process, leaked documents have shown.

According to a number of newspaper reports, East Timor's governor Abilio Soares has used up to £4 million of state funds meant for "social safety net" programmes on the pro-integration campaign, including a publicity drive aimed at promoting the Indonesian government's autonomy package. This has been introduced under the cover of food distribution and home improvement schemes with the bulk of the money being siphoned off by corrupt officials.

According to one report, at least a quarter of the allocations for each of East Timor's 13 districts has been used to pay for "expenditure" by officials incurred while rallying support for the autonomy campaign.

The practice is in direct contravention of Indonesia's pledge to the United Nations that it would hold free and fair elections without state interference. It is also undermining efforts to combat foot shortages, poverty and disease in East Timor.

On a recent visit to the territory, Trocaire's chairman, Bishop John Kirby, witnessed the consequences of the diversion of much needed resources for health and education into the military campaign. "One school I visited," he wrote in the Sunday Tribune, "was facing the prospect of not being able to reopen after the summer holidays because teacher salaries and student subsidies were being diverted to the military. When I visited the town of Baucau, 70 kilometres east of Dili, Bishop Nascimento explained that the most acute impact of this situation is on health. Vital medical staff, such as doctors and nurses, were fleeing the country to escape the insecurity. The exodus was also prompted by their wages being stopped." Only one government-paid doctor now remains in Baucau, a diocese of 94,000 people where malaria and TB are rampant.

The army and its death squads – new covert terror campaign

Despite what the Indonesian armed forces (ABRI) would have the world believe, there was nothing spontaneous about the recent spate of massacres in East Timor. The killings shared a high degree of planning and were supervised and partly executed by the very same body that has been charged by the United Nations with policing the peace.

Having others do its dirty work is not new for ABRI. In December 1975, it trained and armed militia recruited from West Timor and Indonesia with the aim of creating instability in East Timor and paving the way for its illegal invasion. Moreover, paramilitaries have been an integral part of ABRI's armoury during its 23-year occupation of East Timor, providing a channel through which some of its worst excesses of violence could be carried out, and, at the same time, an excuse for its ongoing oppression.

Presenting itself as an honest broker between "warring factions", ABRI continues to justify its violent actions and strong presence in East Timor as a necessary factor for stability. The UN has given weight this lie by making ABRI responsible for security in the territory during the referendum on independence.

The roots of the latest upsurge in militia violence can be traced to the decision by ABRI about a year ago to set up new training camps for vigilantes on East Timor's western border. Villagers from West Timor and Indonesia were recruited, armed and trained in terror activities.

On November 4th 1998, 400 Kopassus special forces troops landed at the port of Kupang in West Timor to bolster the efforts. They had been controlling the pre-existing paramilitary units in East Timor but now they were planning a larger operation aimed at provoking retaliation from pro-independence groups, thus, undermining international peace efforts.

While the Kopassus troops trained their new recruits, ABRI held a public relations stunt on the Dili wharf, organising the withdrawal of a few hundred soldiers from East Timor in front of the international press. Leaked ABRI documents showed just week later that troop numbers had, in fact, increased by as much as 10 per cent to about 18,000, while paramilitary numbers had increased by about 40 per cent to 4,000.

ABRI's plan stepped up a gear last January when President BJ Habibie announced that East Timor could have its freedom if autonomy was rejected. First, the MAHIDI militia group appeared in the south-west of East Timor, perpetrating acts of terror around Suai, and then, Besih Merah Putih emerged on the north-west coast, their names "Live or Die by Integration" and "Red and White Iron", a reference to the Indonesian flag, seeking to strike fear in the local population. (A number of future militia were given pro-autonomy rather than pro-integration identities in an effort to distance them from ABRI.)

As well as training and arming the militiamen, the military have played a supervisory role with many soldiers participating directly in the killings. In all the recent massacres, soldiers were reported to have encircled the area where the killings took place, preventing anyone from escaping the butchery of their hired hands.

Funding from Jakarta, meanwhile, has been plentiful. Militia members are reportedly paid about 250,000 rupiah per month (about $50 US), a substantial income in local terms. In addition, militiamen are believed to receive a bounty of 2-5 million rupiahs for every 'head' captured. According to Indonesian government documents, up to 26 billion rupiahs had been made available to the campaign in the first few months of this year.

Such drains on the Indonesian public purse is part of the reason why President Habibie has considered letting East Timor go. ABRI, however, thinks differently. Its motivation to keep East Timor by force is driven by the much deeper desire not to lose face.

This desire may ironically be bolstered in the minds of the generals by the worsening perception of ABRI in Indonesia. They may feel that if they are seen to allow East Timor enjoy independence it will become obvious that they are not only reviled but beatable. As Indonesian military chief Marzuki Darusman stated recently "if East Timor was let go, it would discredit the whole armed forces completely."

In the same interview, he was questioned about the military's involvement with the death-squads. "Of course, ABRI could stop the militias," he said, "if it wanted to."

Meet the militias...

MAHIDI ("Live or Die by Integration")

Emerged last January after Habibie's suggestion that a referendum might be held. Orchestrated campaign of terror in the south-west, particularly Suai, leading to some killings and the exodus of thousands of refugees. One of its commanders is Mahidin Simbolin, who has a Kopassus background and was a military commander in East Timor. MAHIDI operated with the blatant support of ABRI with whom it attacked the village of Gallitas. The army also supplied the death-squad with automatic weapons.

BMP, Besih Merah Putih (Red & White Iron)

Emerged on the north-west coast in an area populated by the Belu people whose tribal group straddles the border with West Timor. From ABRI's point of view it was seen as a strategic place to commence operations. From there it would be possible to control the northern and southern access roads to Dili, as well as bring in militias from training camps across the border and establish them as the nucleus of a 'civil war'. Bishop Belo confirmed that West Timorese and other outsiders including 'faces from Java' were among the militias. Their involvement helped to explain the willingness of militias to attack victims inside a priest's house, something even pro-integration East Timorese would be unlikely to do.

Aitarak ("Thorn")

Based in Dili, Aitarak is closely associated with ABRI's elite force, Kopassus, and is headed by Eurico Guterres, an ally of the disgraced Lt General Prabowo. Formerly head of Garda Paksi, a youth killer squad set up at the instigation of Prabowo, Guterres has become one of the most reviled militia leaders. At April's pro-autonomy rally in Dili after which scores of people were murdered, he publicly ordered "all pro-integration militia to clean up the defilers of integration". He said "Arrest and kill them if necessary. I will take full responsibility."

Guterres has also become very rich as a result of his bounty-hunting, although he did discover recently he was being paid off with counterfeit notes by ABRI, now tied to a cash-strapped Indonesian government. In fact, some 150 million rupiah worth of forged notes were found to have come into East Timor to pay the militias.

...and their paymasters

ABRI (Indonesian Armed Forces)

East Timor has become a something of a battleground for the competing forces within ABRI in the post-Suharto era. While the military commander-in-chief General Wiranto has pledged support for President Habibie's moves towards peace, many of his generals have openly criticised the process and expressed their determination to see the referendum fail. However, neither Wiranto nor anyone else within ABRI has made any effort to reign in the militia, suggesting they have support from the top of the armed forces and perhaps even from within the Indonesian government itself.

Interestingly, the ABRI commander for East Timor Col Tono Suratman admitted recently in an interview that his chances of promotion depended on him achieving autonomy rather than independence for the territory. "If the pro-independence side wins," he said, in a thinly veiled threat, "everything is going to be destroyed. East Timor won't exist as it does now. It will be much worse than 23 years ago."

Kopassus (special services forces)

ABRI's 6,000-strong elite force Kopassus has been linked with many atrocities in East Timor including the 1991 Santa Cruz massacre. It was Kopassus which trained the first Indonesian and West Timorese militiamen in 1975 which were used to create instability in East Timor before its invasion. The special forces unit has since been responsible for training and supervising pro-integration paramilitaries which, according to official Indonesian army figures, now number at least 4,000.

Suharto and his cronies cling to land and industry

More than one-third of all land in East Timor is owned by the Suharto family and the former president's cronies, according to a new book on the Indonesian military's business interests in the territory.

The Suharto landholdings stretch from the western border to the eastern tip of East Timor and include 50,000 hectares of timber plantations and tens of thousands of sugarcane plantations near Suai on the south coast.

In "Is Oil Thicker than Blood?", Indonesian academic Gorge Aditjondro details the this tangled financial web, highlighting the links between Suharto and the scores of army generals who served him during the invasion and annexation of East Timor.

Dr Aditjondro was a lecturer in politics at the prestigious Gajah Mada in Jogjkarata, Central Java, before he was forced to flee Indonesia two years ago after publishing a book about Indonesia's colonial policy. He now lives in Australia where he has written extensively about the Suharto family's business empire, worth an estimated $60 billion.

The best marble deposits in East Timor are in Manatuto and are owned by Suharto's eldest daughter, Siti, who also has a monopoly over coffee production and export. Another company linked to Suharto, Batara Indra, controls the sandalwood forests and production and export of Sandalwood oil. It is owned by two retired generals and veterans of the genocidal campaign in East Timor, Benny Murdani and Dading Kalbuda.

Among the few East Timorese to have benefited from Indonesian rule are governor Abilio Soares and Basilio Araujo, deputy head of the provincial investment board which oversees the issuing of investment licenses in East Timor.

According to Dr Aditjondro, the financial breakdown sheds some light on the rationale for the current wave of violence perpetrated by army-backed paramilitaries. Behind the violence, says the author, is a strategy to partition East Timor so that the western half, where the concentration of oil and other resources is greatest, remains part of Indonesia. The idea may not be as far-fetched as it seems. During his recent visit to East Timor, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, David Andrews, was told by governor Soares that the territory would be divided in two if the independence referendum was successful.

Indonesian generals 'should face war crimes tribunal'

Members of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs expressed support recently for the establishment of an international war crimes tribunal in East Timor which would prosecute the Indonesian generals responsible for the ongoing genocide in the territory. At a meeting of the committee in June, its chairman Des O'Malley TD said that what was happening in East Timor was "every bit as bad in many ways as what is happening in Kosovo. The fact that it is further away does not make it less important in terms of human rights."

He was speaking after a submission had been made to the committee by the East Timor Ireland Solidarity Campaign with personal testimony from two members of the campaign who had recently returned from the territory.

In his submission, ETISC coordinator Tom Hyland said "the UN Security Council needs to threaten Indonesian army commanders in East Timor with a war crimes tribunal in the same way as Slobodan Milosevic" to save the independence referendum from disaster. He called on the committee to write to the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, asking for up to 10,000 peacekeepers to be sent to East Timor to police the vote, as requested by Bishop Carlos Belo. "So long as security is within the authority of the Indonesians a free and fair ballot is not possible."

Mr O'Malley said the very least the committee could do would be to express "our strong feeling that there is a need for between 8,000 and 10,000 UN peacekeepers in the territory and that they would be properly armed."

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Mass killings sweep Timor

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Arrest and kill them if necessary." He then declared that the home of Manuel Carracalao was the main target of the day's operations.

Following the rally, the paras drove around the town, shooting at random into the air and attacking a number of houses and buildings connected with pro-independence activities. They then went to the home of Manuel Carrascalao, a well-known businessman, formerly a member of the local assembly who has become vociferously pro-independence.

Fearing the worst, Manuel's brother, Mario, rushed to the local military commander's office to make a desperate appeal for protection. He was told by Colonel Tono Suratman, who had attended the rally and knew what was going on, "we have to be neutral. You Timorese must sort this out yourself."

All escape routes from the house were blocked off by the paramilitaries before launching their attack. About 170 people had taken refuge inside. Those who survived gave testimony to an unrelenting slaughter designed to kill every single man, woman and child.

Among the dead was Manuelito Carrascalao, the 17-year-old adopted son of Manuel. His body showed he had been shot in the head, stabbed in the stomach and sliced with a blade across the shoulder. One man, who survived severe stab wounds by pretending to be dead, said he saw women being shot and slashed and their babies being snatched from their arms, held by the feet and their heads smashed against the wall.

The death toll cannot be accurately determined because many of the corpses as well as the wounded were removed by the army to unknown destinations. The generally accepted figure is that at least 30 people were slain.

With many governments and world leaders condemning the slaughter and holding the Indonesian armed forces responsible, ABRI's commander-in-chief General Wiranto made a hurried visit to Dili for damage limitation purposes. Despite intensified calls for the paramilitaries to be disbanded, however, he made it clear that arms supplied by ABRI to the death squads would not be withdrawn.

Instead, he organised a ceremonial signing of a so-called peace accord between "the two warring factions" when, in fact, there is only on warring factions in East Timor, the paramilitaries and their ABRI backers.

While this agreement was being signed in Dili, more killings were underway in Suai, a town located in the south-west corner of East Timor. Information about the killings is sketchy but there are reports of dozens of people disappearing and bodies being thrown into a river, some severely mutilated or decapitated. The local parish priest, Fr Hilario, said the death toll may have been as high as 100.

A further wave of terror was reported at the same time in the prosperous region of Ermera. A visiting journalist from The Observer found a village chief had been beaten to death by local army officers on the same day the peace accord had been signed in Dili. This followed a two week campaign of terror during which between six and 12 people were killed.

Mass killings sweep across Timor

Operation Clean-Sweep (Orerasi Sapu Jagad), the Indonesian military's plan for wiping out the pro-independence movement before the UN-sponsored referendum, began in earnest in April with three massacres in a fortnight.

In a combined operation by paramilitary death-squads and Indonesian army (ABRI) troops, scores of East Timorese civilians were shot and stabbed to death in Liquisa, Dili and Suai. According to conservative estimates, at least 100 people were massacred.

The killing spree started in the Liquisa sub-district on April 4th where two dozen members of a newly-established pro-integration paramilitary group attacked the village of Dato, destroying the house of the village head. The following day a second attack was launched, this time supported by ABRI troops who supplied the militia group with weapons, including semi-automatic rifles. Five people were killed and eight were seriously injured. A dozen houses were razed to the ground.

Most of the terrorised villagers fled to Liquisa and sought sanctuary in a church. Two priests brought a temporary calm to the situation by holding discussions with an ABRI commander.

However, the next day, the priests were removed from the scene to a military barracks and an attack was launched on the church, where more than 2,000 displaced villagers had taken refuge. The attacking force comprised soldiers from two separate army battalions, local police and death-squad fighters belonging to the BMP (Besi Merah Putih) group, led by Eurico Guterres.

Under the protection of ABRI troops who surrounded the building and fired into the air, the paramilitaries began shooing into the church. A tear gas grenade was thrown inside and the people taking sanctuary fled only to be set upon by men armed with knives, machetes and firearms. Scores of men and women were mercilessly stabbed, hacked and shot to death.

The Nobel peace prize winner Bishop Carlos Belo of Dili put the death toll at 25. However, human rights groups have compiled a list of 57 dead and 35 wounded. Fourteen more people are reported as having disappeared.

The parish priest, Fr Rafael dos Santos, who was forcibly removed from the premises before the killing began, said all the bodies had been taken away when he returned. "There was blood everywhere. The Indonesian armed forces and government must be held responsible for the massacre," he said.

Eye-witnesses said the corpses were loaded onto the back of two army trucks and taken to an unknown location for mass burial.

The following Sunday Bishop Belo went to Liquisa to hold a Mass but when he arrived he found an empty church, such was the fear induced in the local population. On the way back to Dili, the bishop's car was pelted with rocks. Pro-integration militias were believed to have been responsible.

In the following week, on April 17th, Dili was the chosen target of Operasi Sapu Jagad. The day began with a rally organised by a military-backed pro-autonomy militia called MPO (Milisi Pro-Otonomi). It was held outside Governor Abilio Soares' office and was attended by the governor, local military and police chiefs and paramilitary death-squad leaders. Among these was Eurico Guterres who, in a speech full of venom and hatred, urged "all pro-integration militia to clean up the defilers of integration.

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'Crying mothers were stabbed as their children were thrown at the wall' - eyewitness

One survivor of the April 17 massacre at Manuel Carrascalao's house in Dili was 19-year-old Victor dos Santos Lay. This is an excerpt of his testimony published in Asiaweek magazine

At about 9 a.m. I was dropped off by motorbike at the home of Manuelito Carrascalao, the son of Manuel Carrascalao. As usual, I came to that place to do nothing other than to visit and chat with Manuelito, who is one of my close friends. At first, we were outside the house. However, we heard that the rally of the militia in front of the governor's office had dispersed, and some members could be seen heading for their base at the Tropikal building located west of the Carrascalao residence. Because we were afraid of being attacked, we entered Manuelito's house and got busy with light conversation about young people's affairs. I couldn't imagine at the time that just a few house later that place would be attacked.

At about 12.30, about 15 militia members complete with traditional weapons like parangs (knives) and carrying automatic and home-made weapons, spears and samurai blades came to the Carrascalao house. They took apart the fence in front and asked the whereabouts of Manuel Carrascalao. Then these people left and went back to their secretariat.

About half an hour later, the militia plus soldiers and police came back in greater numbers. While shouting abusive words, the militia members encircled the house from all directions. I tried to run out, and I was shot at by the militia. I saw clearly the police's mobile brigade and military involved with the militia encircling the house. What happened next was "banjir darah", a flood of blood.

Without discriminating, the militia, mobile brigade and soldiers started shooting and killing the people inside the house, most of whom were refugees (who had sought sanctuary there after fleeing from militia attacks in the countryside). I tried to defend myself, evading several times the stabs from the parangs and samurai swords. My arm was severely wounded from the strikes of the blades. My left thumb was almost cut off. My right arm from the elbow to the finger tips had terrible and deep cuts. The killing went on despicably and sadistically. I saw with my own eyes the people beside me killed like animals.

There were three or four children, their age about one or two years old, who were taken from their mothers, then tossed and thrown at the wall. At the same time their crying mothers were also stabbed. There was a young girl, about 17 years old, whom I saw stabbed in the back and when she fell, the militia, soldiers and police cut off her left breast.

On witnessing this tragedy, I, who was already so cut up, reflexively pretended to be dead. In this state of feigning death, I heard the voices of those being killed shrieking, shouting and begging for mercy, cries mixed in with the abuse of the killers.

My feigning death saved my life because the militia and some members of the police and military left me just sprawled beside the kitchen door. I also overheard the soldiers, police and militia telling their friends to hide the bodies straight away because later they would be discovered by journalists and foreign parties. So the corpses were heaped up like game animals gathered by hunters to form a small hill.

When I was out of sight of the killers, I was able to help two refugees sprawled beside me. These two people, who were also severely wounded, I carefully and stealthily hid under cardboard while asking them to feign death. My efforts successfully saved these two people even though their condition was also really terrible.

The killing continued for an hour. When I saw the situation calm again (at about 4 p.m.), I escaped through the back door. Though the pain from the wounds in my arm hurt incredibly, with whatever remaining strength I had I tried to slip into the house next door in order to save my life. Midway, I felt a little faint, probably because I had lost so much blood. I sat down for a moment before trying again. In my heart, I thought that even though in the end I would probably die, at least there would be someone who could witness that I had been in the house of Manuel Carrascalao. And if I died, my body could be taken by my family so it could be buried as an orang kecil (ordinary person) who didn't know anything about politics.

• Dos Santos Lay eventually escaped and was treated in a church clinic along with the two refugees he saved. The clinic remains under threats from pro-integration militias who are seeking eyewitnesses to the massacre.

Gardai join UN mission in East Timor

Nine gardai are included in the 270-strong civilian police force which has been charged by the United Nations with supervising the East Timorese ballot on independence.

The nine were among the first international police advisors to arrive in East Timor. Before flying into Dili, they completed an induction course in Darwin, Australia, where a number of Irish APSO volunteers due to monitor the vote are also being briefed on conditions in Timor.

The Garda mission is headed by Superintendent Gerry Phillips, from Limerick, who is based in Baucau with Sgt John McGing, a native of Kildare town. The others are Sgt Larry Mythen from Wexford, Garda John Murphy from Co Mayo, Garda Anne Dorian from Co Louth, Garda Julie Dunphy from Westmeath, Detective Garda Paul Cullen from north Dublin, Garda Robert McConn from Roscommon and Det Garda Joy Treacy from Carlow.

Other countries to have sent police officers for the UN Assistance Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) are Australia, New Zealand, Spain and Britain. The unarmed international force will act in an advisory capacity to the Indonesian police, who are responsible for ensuring East Timor remains peaceful in the run-up to the vote. The international police will also be responsible for guarding and transporting the ballot boxes during the vote.

At the raising of the UN flag in Dili on June 4th, thousands of East Timorese held an impromptu demonstration of support. Mr David Ximenes, a spokesman for the National Council for Timorese Resistance (CNRT), came out of hiding to address the crowd. "The presence of the UN is a victory for peace among the people of East Timor," he said.

Father Domingo Soares, a Catholic priest and independence leader who also came out of hiding for the ceremony, said the establishment for the UN mission marked a new phase in East Timor's history that would lead to independence. "We are happy," he said, "despite the terrorisation of the people by the Indonesian security forces, people will be given the chance to vote for independence. I have worked closely with the people as a parish priest and if the UN allows them to vote without intimidation, 99 per cent will vote for independence."

The UN mission arrived amid growing concerns about militia violence. On a number of occasions, the UN accused the Indonesian security forces of colluding with the militias and organising attacks on aid workers.

In July, pro-integration gangs attacked UN police advisers and their helicopters as the they tried to evacuate aid workers injured in an earlier clash.

The East Timorese themselves are deeply concerned about the decision to make the Indonesian authorities responsible for security during the vote. The CNRT likened it to having "the fox looking after the chickens".

'They said if we didn't join the militias they would kill our son'

On a recent visit to East Timor, ETISC supporter Sean Steele witnessed villagers being bribed and bullied into joining pro-integration paramilitaries

For weeks it seemed certain that something "big" was going to happen. Even in the relative safety of Dili the signs were all there. Groups of people from remote rural areas had been arriving in the East Timorese capital for weeks after being burnt out of their homes.

Terrified, they sought shelter in relatives' houses or in churches. In one case a group of eight men and boys slept in the doorway to the office of the Catholic charity Caritas. Anywhere just to feel safe.

They all told similar stories: attacks in the middle of the night by gangs of paramilitaries and soldiers who fired at them indiscriminately. Several told of friends shot dead while trying to flee.

In a corrugated iron shack 50 yards from the Hotel Turismo, Maria Dos Santos from Viqueque told how soldiers threatened to kill her son. "They held him by his hair and the commander put the knife to this throat," she recalled, drawing her finger under her chin. "Then they said that if we didn't join the militias they would kill him."

Maria, her husband Emilio, and son, fled two days later after soldiers ordered them to attend a militia rally outside the town church. The pain etched on her face embodied the suffering of the whole nation.

Everywhere the story was the same. In Liquica, Maliana, Suai, Zumalai, and Baucau, thousands had fled their homes. Pro-independence villages were targeted especially those where people had begun to talk openly about the prospect of freedom after Suharto's resignation and a possible referendum.

Hopes that the 23-year nightmare was ending have been dashed by the creation of new pro-integration paramilitary death squads of which many villages are being forced to become members. The Indonesian military, ABRI, has denied involvement with the groups but in Zumelai on the south coast, I saw soldiers drilling militiamen. At a "pro-integration rally", groups of anxious looking Timorese clapped on cue as solders made blood curdling speeches about "defending integration to the death".

Militia attacks have followed a definite pattern by starting in remote villages and working their way into larger towns. The attacks have created a serious refugee problem. In Suai, for example, over 1,000 people slept on the floor of an unfurnished cathedral with no roof, afraid to leave. Huddled within the bare walls they described how militias chased them out of their villages while police looked on.

On April 17th, the militia's "big move" on Dili took place. It began with a rally of 1,500 people, including Indonesian officials, at the Governor's Palace. Militia leader Eurico Guterres urged the crowd to "kill, kill, kill", making threats against Xanana Gusmao, Bishop Carlos Belo, and Manuel Carrascalao, a pro-Indonesian activist who openly criticised ABRI terror and was sheltering refugees at his home.

The militias headed off in a convoy of about 30 trucks, which I joined (The driver of the truck I was on said he was pro-independence but had been paid $25, a month's wages). On their way around the deserted city they burned several houses and a market within yards of barracks where soldiers stood cheering.

When the convoy halted outside Manuel Carrasclao's house,150 militiamen attacked it, urged on by Indonesian soldiers. They killed Carrasclao's 17-year-old son Manuelito with a sword and ten refugees sheltering there.

Outside, militiamen suddenly turned on a group of foreigners including myself. Several of them tried to grab us but we shook them off and made our way to the safety of the hotel.

Emotional meeting of Timorese prisoner and 'grandmother'

An 86-year-old Quaker was united in Dublin recently with her "adopted grandson", an East Timorese political prisoner to whom she wrote during his six-year incarceration in an Indonesian jail.

"I never thought that I would ever meet him. It's just wonderful," declared Nancy Bevin, a peace activist from Wales, after coming face to face for the first time with Juvencio Martins, who was arrested and imprisoned after the Santa Cruz massacre in Dili in November 1991.

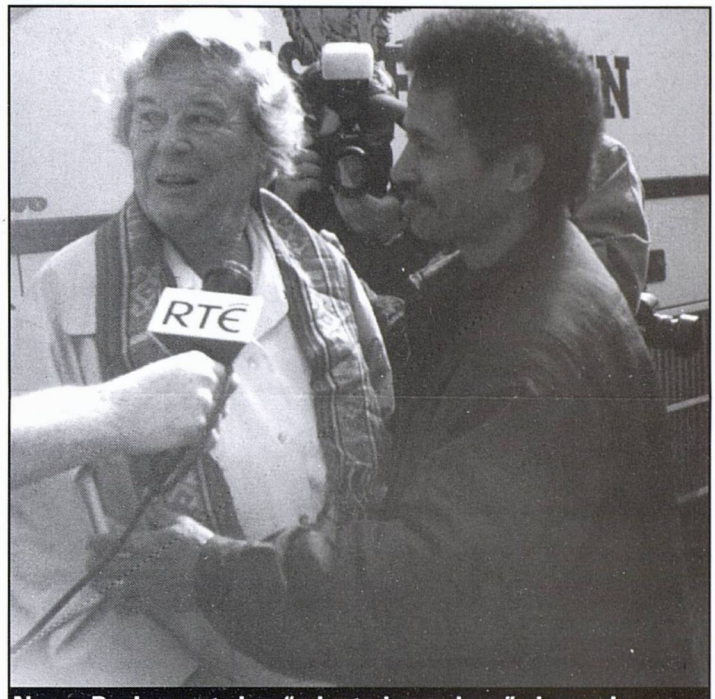
Mr Martins said it was "a dream come true. During my imprisonment I felt really neglected and isolated. Her letters were like an oasis in the desert. They helped me get through the long nights and years."

The pro-democracy activist was sentenced to six years and ten months for helping to organise the peaceful demonstration at the Santa Cruz cemetery during which Indonesian troops opened fire, killing at least 270. He was categorised a "prisoner of conscience" by Amnesty International and spent the bulk of his term in a prison in Central Java.

Ms Bevin learnt of his case through a Quaker prisoner befriending group and wrote to him regularly, sometimes sending books and money which he used to smuggle letters out. They addressed each other as "grandmother" and "grandson" in their correspondence which continued up to Mr Martins release in August 1997. He since fled to the United States due to ongoing persecution by the Indonesian military.

Mr Martins expressed his gratitude to the Irish embassy in Washington for granting him a visa to visit Ireland in order to meet Ms Bevin. Britain had previously refused to allow him travel to Wales.

He also thanked the Government for taking a strong stance on the East Timor issue. "Australia and Ireland are the two countries we are familiar with in East Timor," he said, "Australia because it was the first to recognise Indonesian occupation and Ireland because, in contrast, it was the first to recognise our right to self-determination. We are very grateful to the Irish people and the government for all they have done." Ms Bevin said she was glad to have given some support to her "grandson" through his incarceration. "It just goes to show the power of words."



Nancy Bevin meets her "adopted grandson", Juvencio Martins, for the first time at Busarus in Dublin.

Population control programmes continue

The Indonesian government is continuing to restrict the birth rate in East Timor through State-run contraception programmes. This is despite the fact that the territory's medical infrastructure is now almost non-existent, with the government blockading bulk shipments of drugs.

Most medical staff, who are 'transmigrants' from other islands have already left, leaving the 800,000 population dependent on the efforts of the Catholic Church and a very small number of (unofficial) foreign volunteers. One of these, an American GP who has also worked in wartime Mozambique and Laos, told journalists that tuberculosis was at the highest rate he had ever encountered.

The Indonesian government has operated the Program Keluarga (KB Program) right across the archipelago. It was introduced in East Timor in 1980, once the first phase of the war against the Fretilin resistance movement had been completed, although birth control might have seemed a questionable necessity, as by then 200,000 people were already dead.

In that year, Red Cross officials estimated the conditions in East Timor to be equal or worse "to Biafra in 1970". Most of the hundreds of thousands who had fled to the mountains after the 1975 invasion had been forced down, to be resettled in camps where they died in their thousands from malaria or malnutrition.

The KB program is implemented through the National Family Planning Co-ordinating Board (BKKBN), who have offices in each administrative district and it is estimated that by 1994-5, there were about 100 KB clinics in East Timor. In spring of this year, activists with the OMT (Organisation Mulhern Timor), the Timorese Women's' Organisation, told journalists that Indonesian doctors come to the clinics on the second Saturday of each month.

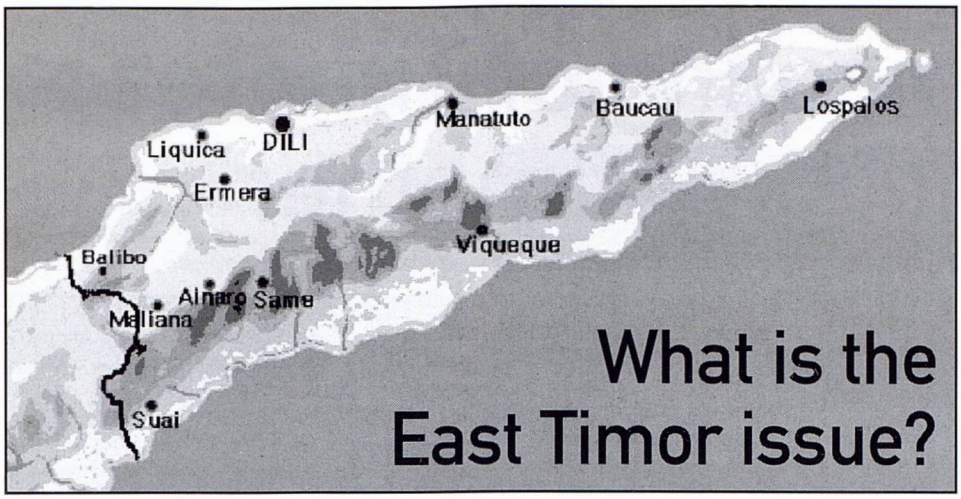
Women who decline the 'advice' of the Dharma Wanita, the Women's' Brigade, to attend the clinics (and many do) run the risk of harassment by the Indonesian armed forces (ABRI). Moreover ABRI, in its 'dual function', actively participates in the promotion of the KB program. Women are either given IUD (Intra-Uterine Devices) or injections of the drugs Net-En (every month) or Depo-Provera (every three months). Women who suffer side effects, including ectopic pregnancies, weight loss, menstrual problems and cancer, are entirely excluded from any care or compensation.

Although compulsory contraception (which breaches Article II d of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide) is carried on other islands, it is more aggressively promoted in East Timor. In the decade 1980-90, the TFR (Total Fertility Rate) in East Timor was half the average of the other Indonesian provinces.

Officially, a family is only allowed two children, although many families have four or more. Cases have been reported of women going into hospitals for simple operations and waking up with hysterectomies.

Along with the resettling of non-Timorese migrants in the territory, these programmes have the ultimate objective of eradicating the Timorese people. The money and effort spent on the KB programme is disproportionate to the overall medical services in East Timor which, even before the 1997 Asian slump, were easily the worst in Indonesia. In 1996, United Nations statistics showed a mortality rate double the rest of Indonesia and the highest in South East Asia. The infant mortality rate of 149 per 1,000 was one of the five worst in the world.

• Report by Tom Farrell, who recently visited East Timor.



What is the East Timor issue?

COLONY: Located 300 miles north of the Australia, East Timor was a Portuguese colony for more than 400 years until 1974 when Portugal's fascist regime collapsed, brining independence to its colonies throughout the world. In that year, East Timor set about discussing options for its future and planning a new independent government.

INVASION: Indonesia, however, had other plans. It did not want a small, independent, democratic country on its boarders and began destabilising East Timor with troop incursions in 1975. During this period six Western journalists were brutally murdered by Indonesian troops. Then, a full-scale invasion by land, sea and air took place on December 7th 1975 with mass slaughter, indiscriminate killing of men, women and children, looting and rape.

GENOCIDE: In the first six months of the invasion, an estimated 80,000 people died. To the present day, at least 250,000, or a third of the population, have been killed from massacres, bombing and starvation.

BETRAYAL: Despite the extent of the killing, the international community turned its back on East Timor. The United States, a close ally of Indonesia, gave its tacit approval to the invasion, as did Australia, which has lobbied support for Indonesia at the UN. Australia was rewarded in 1989 when the Timor Gap Treaty was signed, sharing East Timor's rich oil resources between Australia and Indonesia.

MASSACRE: The brutality of life under Indonesian occupation was brought to world attention on November 12th 1991 when over 270 peaceful protesters were shot dead by Indonesian troops at the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili, the capital of East Timor. A further 200 people were executed in police custody after the demonstration. Such atrocities were not rare in East Timor. But this one was different because it was filmed by a Western television journalist, whose pictures of defenceless citizens being gunned down by soldiers forced the international community to stand up and take note.

NOBEL PRIZE: In recent years, the struggle to free East Timor has gathered pace. In 1996, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded jointly to Bishop Carlos Belo of Dili and the East Timorese foreign minister in exile, Jose Ramos Horta. Nelson Mandela and Kofi Annan are among those to have since backed calls for the release of the East Timorese resistance leader Xanana Gusmao, who remains under house arrest in Jakarta.

REFERENDUM: East Timor was given further hope in May 1998 when President Suharto of Indonesia stepped down after 32 years of despotic rule. His replacement, BJ Habibie, eventually bowed to international pressure and promised a package of reforms for East Timor. In January 1999, he said Indonesia might grant independence to East Timor if autonomy was deemed unacceptable by the 800,000-strong local population. In May 1999, an agreement was signed between Portugal and Indonesia paving the way for a UN-supervised ballot on the autonomy package which was due to take place on August 8th. The vote has since been postponed, however, due to ongoing Indonesian-sponsored violence.

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ETISC is seeking to expand its Rapid Response network. As a member of the network you will be sent details of important issues, such as human rights abuses, arrests, arms transfers, etc, which require urgent attention. In each case, we shall be appealing to you to write to the relevant authorities to express your dissatisfaction or concern.

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- Death of a Nation [John Pilger, David Munro]
- Cold Blood: The Massacre of East Timor

New:
- Grounding a Hawk with a Hammer (Anne Daly and Ronan Tynan)
- Bishop Belo - "Sometimes I must speak out strongly" (Max Stahl)

PUBLICATIONS:
- East Timor: Genocide in Paradise by Mathew Jardine, Intro by Noam Chomsky: £5
- The Unfinished Struggle by Constancio Pinto & Mathew Jardine – £9.95
- From One Day to Another: Violations of Women's Reproductive and Sexual Rights in East Timor by Miranda E. Sissons — £6
- East Timor for Beginners — £5
- East Timor: Third World Colonialism and the Struggle for National Identity — £6.50

POSTERS:
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'Free Xanana Now' postcards addressed to General Bambang Yudhoyono, Mabes ABRI, Cilangkap, Jakarta Timur, Indonesia.

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